



30 \$2.25 US
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MAY 97

ROBINSON

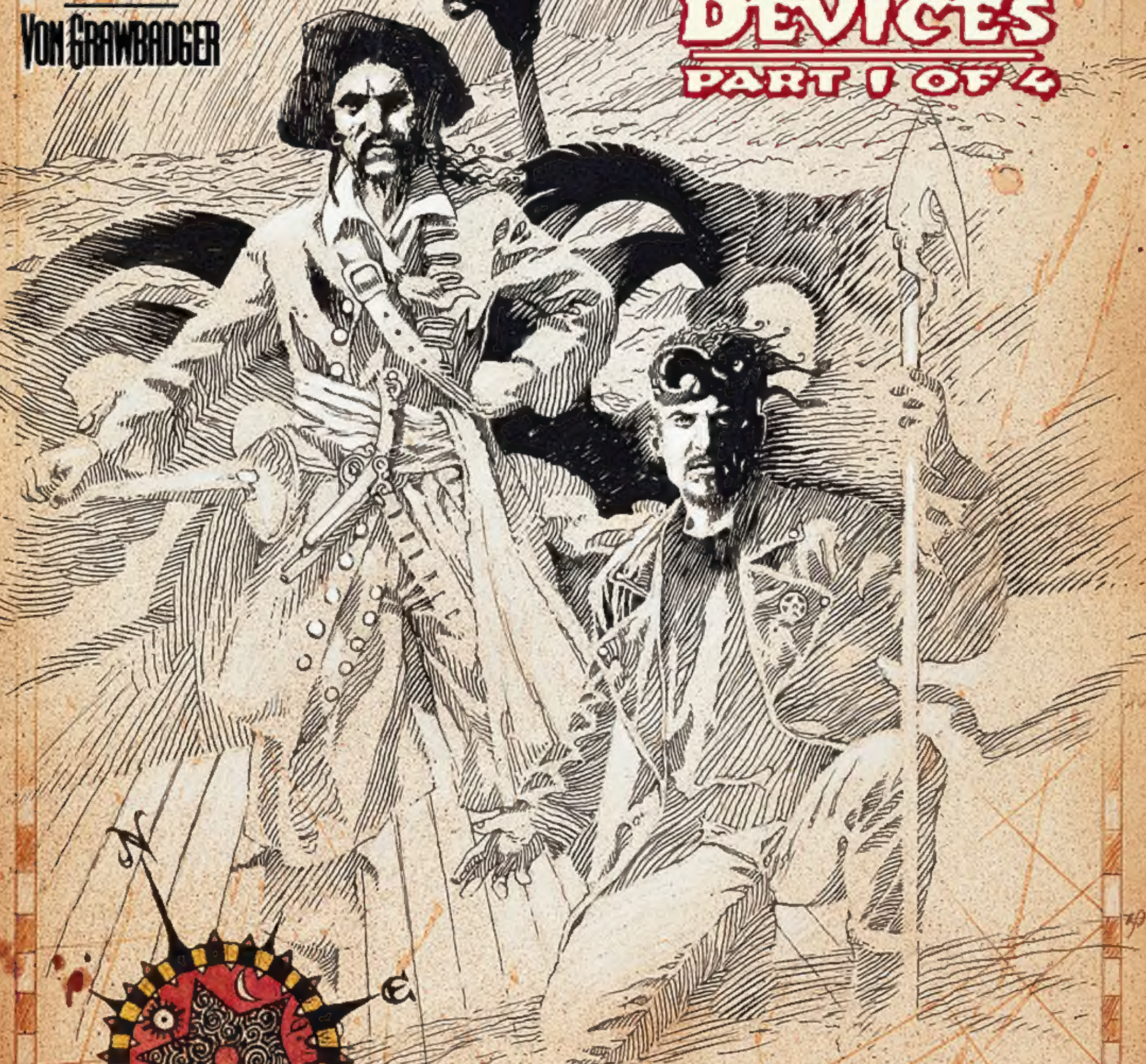
HARRIS

VON CRAWBADGER

STARMAN



INFERNAL
DEVICES
PART 1 OF 4



Harris 96
AFTER PYLE



YES, BUT YOU DON'T KNOW MY HUSBAND. HE'S VERY PARTICULAR.

I REALLY WANTED THIS BIRTHDAY TO HAVE PRESENTS HE GENUINELY LIKED AND NOT JUST ONES HE'LL STUFF AWAY IN A CLIPBOARD AND NEVER USE.



WHAT ABOUT THE BLUE SWEATER? IT'S SIMPLER AND WILL PROBABLY GO WITH MORE.



YES, THAT'S A DEFINITE POSSIBILITY. I'LL THINK--



UM...DO YOU SMELL SOMETHING? A BURNING SMELL?

YES, BUT WHERE--



THE GHOST
WANDERS...

...AND
WONDERS.

IF NOW IS THE TIME
OF HIS VINDICATION.

AND OHHH, THE HEADACHES HE
WOULD HAVE WHEN A NIGHT OF
GROG AND BISCUITS BECAME A
MORNING OF STARK, SUNNY
DAMNATION, ARE NOTHING TO
THE ECHOES IN HIS HEAD THIS
DAY.

THE MEMORY OF
NOISES ONCE,
BECOME A TORMENT
FROM THE LONGING
HE FEELS FOR
THOSE TIMES.



THE CRY OF GULL AND BARK OF
PUFFIN. THE YELL OF THE WATCH FROM
CROW TO FO'C'SLE, AS SPANISH
PLUNDER CAME TO VIEW A'LEEWARD.
THE CHEERFUL WHISTLE OF A TOM
MINT, HIS SAIL MAKER, AS HE TENDED
TO JIB OR MIZZEN STAYSAIL. THE
HUNGRY SNAP OF THE SHOT LOCKER
HATCH AS SMUT COLLINS, THE
GUNNER'S MATE, WRENCHED IT
FREE... READYING BALLS FOR SOME
FIERY EXCHANGE.



AND THE
CALLS...

"SHEET
HOME!"

"HOIST AWAY!"

"T'GARNS'L
SHEETS, LOOK
ALIVE!"

HE REMEMBERS A PIRATE, EL VERA, A PORTUGUESE BY BIRTH THOUGH HIS MAN-OF-WAR FLEW SPANISH TRIM. KNOWN FOR HIS DISEMBOWELING; AND A RANK FOE INDEED, HE ONCE CAPTURED A SMALL PARTY THE GHOST'S OWN CREW.

MILES GOODFELLOW WAS SHIP'S BOY. AN EAGER LAD, WITH HOPES OF BEING MADE CARPENTER'S CREW IN A YEAR. HE WAS AMONG THOSE TAKEN AND THE ONE EL VERA CHOSE TO MAKE EXAMPLE OF.

HE STRAPPED MILES HIGH TO THE FORE TOPGALLANT, WHERE THE WINDS CUT THE POOR LAD LIKE MOORISH DIRKS AND THE SUN TURNED HIS BLOOD TO BROTH. THE GHOST HAD WEPT FOR HIM. ONCE AGO.

NOW HE ENVIES THE BOY HIS FATE.

FOR AT LEAST HE DIED A TRUE DEATH. A GOOD DEATH AYE, EVEN IF THE DYING ITSELF WAS A BAD'UN.

BUT THE GHOST HAS HOPES IN THE CITY'S NEW CHAMPION. HE WHO FLIES OF A NIGHTTIME, ABOVE THE TERRIER GRAY TILES OF OPAL'S ALLEYS.

THAT HE MIGHT BE THE ONE WHO WILL AID LET HIM ON TO WHATEVER AFTERLIFE MILES GOODFELLOW HAS ENJOYED THESE FOUR CENTURIES DONE.

Infernal Devices Part 1

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SO
JACK, ARE WE
DATING?

I
DON'T
KNOW,
SADIE.

WELL, THIS
IS THE *THIRD* TIME
WE'VE GOTTEN TOGETHER.
I KNOW WE HAVEN'T KISSED
OR ANYTHING, BUT THIS IS
SURE STARTING TO FEEL
LIKE A DATING THING.

LET'S
SEE HOW IT
GOES.



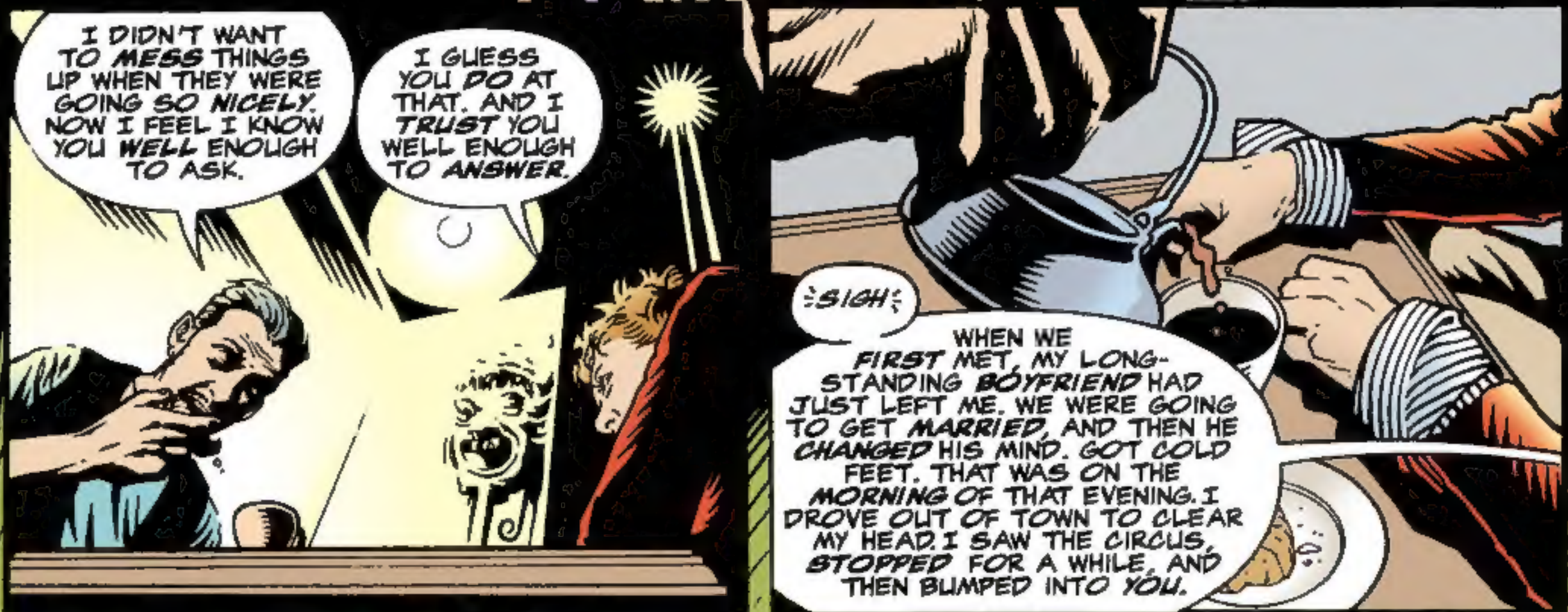
YEAH.



SO
TELL ME
SOMETHING...

WHEN WE
FIRST BUMPED
INTO EACH OTHER
AT THE CIRCUS, AND THEN
WHEN YOU SAW ME AT
CHARITY'S AFTER THAT. WHY
WERE YOU SO RUDE? AND
THEN WHEN WE BUMPED INTO
EACH OTHER OUTSIDE THE
BARBERS YOU WERE
AS NICE AS
ANYTHING.

JUST NOW YOU
GET AROUND TO
ASKING THAT?



I DIDN'T WANT
TO MESS THINGS
UP WHEN THEY WERE
GOING SO NICELY.
NOW I FEEL I KNOW
YOU WELL ENOUGH
TO ASK.

I GUESS
YOU DO AT
THAT. AND I
TRUST YOU
WELL ENOUGH
TO ANSWER.

SIGH

WHEN WE
FIRST MET, MY LONG-
STANDING BOYFRIEND HAD
JUST LEFT ME. WE WERE GOING
TO GET MARRIED, AND THEN HE
CHANGED HIS MIND. GOT COLD
FEET. THAT WAS ON THE
MORNING OF THAT EVENING. I
DROVE OUT OF TOWN TO CLEAR
MY HEAD. I SAW THE CIRCUS,
STOPPED FOR A WHILE, AND
THEN BUMPED INTO YOU.

THEN WHEN I SAW YOU A
SECOND TIME, THE SIGHT OF
YOU REMINDED ME OF THE
FIRST TIME WE MET, WHICH
REMINDED ME OF MY
BOYFRIEND AND ALL THE
HURT CAME BACK.

BUT BY THAT
THIRD TIME, MY
HEART HAD TIME TO
HEAL A BIT.

YOU
STILL FEEL
SOMETHING FOR
YOUR EX?

I DON'T KNOW.
MAYBE. I WON'T LIE.

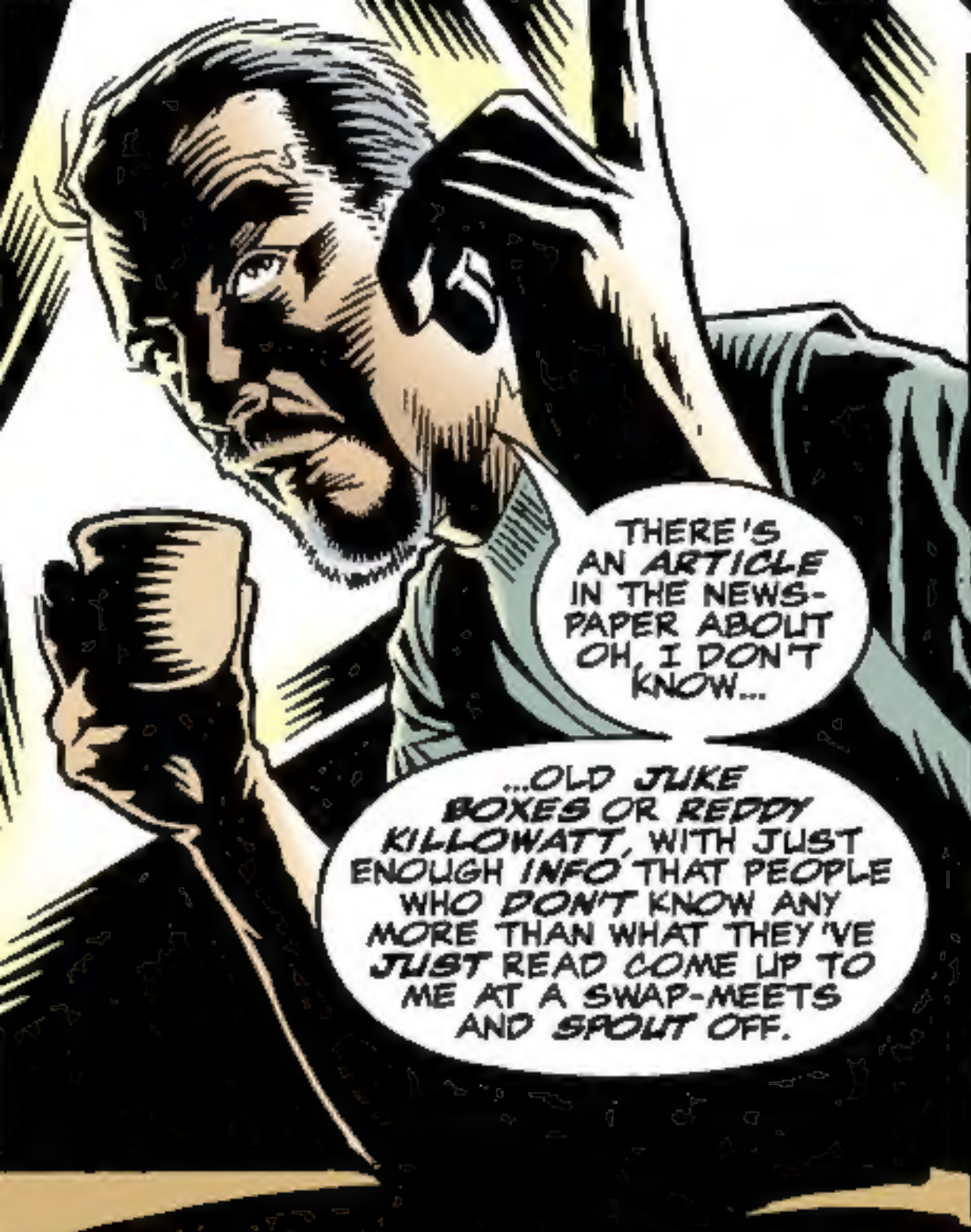
WHAT ABOUT
YOU? YOU
HAD GIRL-
FRIENDS?

LOTS OF THEM.
ONE I STARTED
UP WITH AGAIN
FOR LIKE... NO
TIME AT ALL,
AND SHE TURNED
AROUND AND
DUMPED ME.

AND
WHAT DON'T YOU
LIKE? YOU KNOW.
LIKES AND DISLIKES.
I DON'T REALLY
KNOW ANY OF
THAT.

HMMM. DISLIKES. UH,
YEAH, I KNOW.

PEOPLE THAT
PROFESS TO KNOW
INTIMATE DETAILS ABOUT
STUFF... I'M TALKING
COLLECTIBLES NOW, BY THE
WAY. PEOPLE WHO HAVEN'T
WALKED THE WALK... BEEN TO THE
MEETS AND THE JUNK STORES
AND LOOKED AROUND AND
ASKED LITTLE THINGS AND
GAINED THEIR KNOWLEDGE A
PIECE AT A TIME.



THERE'S AN ARTICLE IN THE NEWS-PAPER ABOUT OH, I DON'T KNOW...

...OLD JUKE BOXES OR REDDY KILLOWATT, WITH JUST ENOUGH INFO THAT PEOPLE WHO DON'T KNOW ANY MORE THAN WHAT THEY'VE JUST READ COME UP TO ME AT A SWAP-MEETS AND SPOUT OFF.

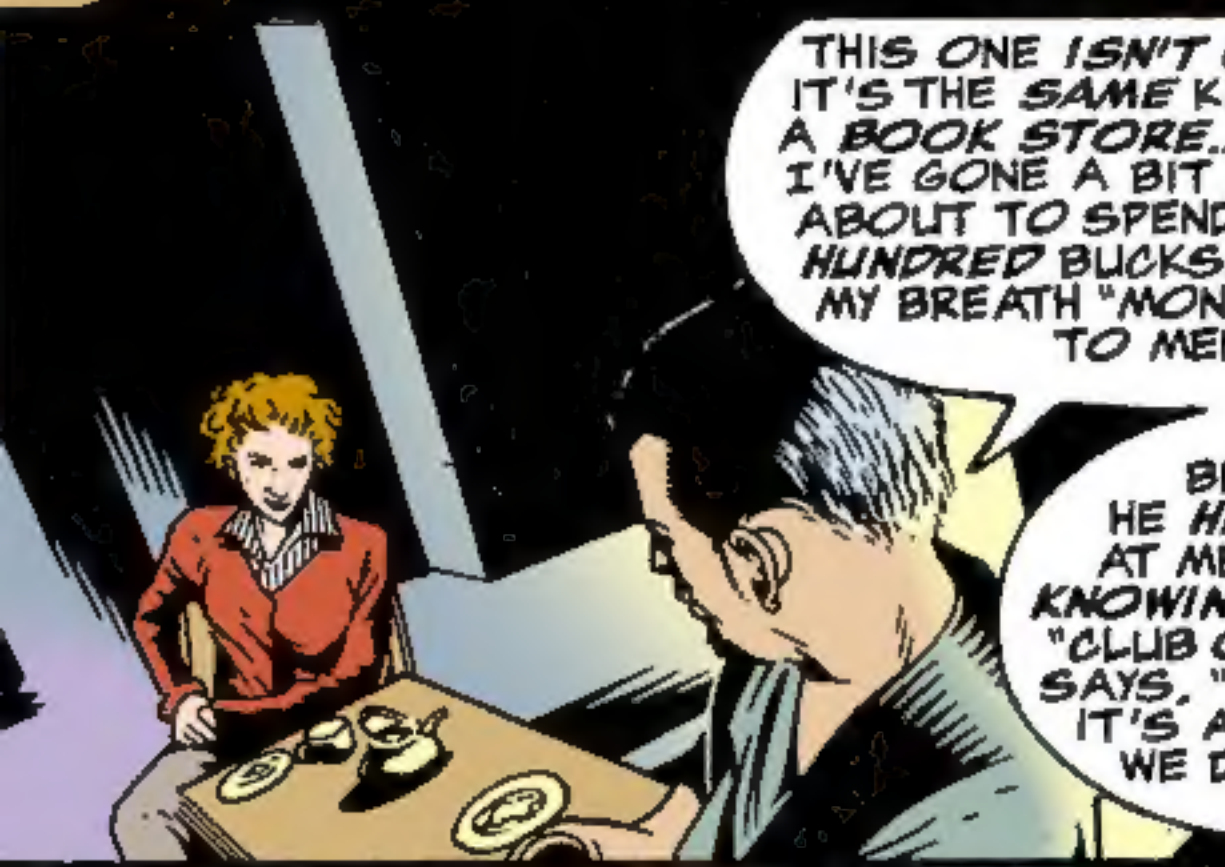


A FEW WELL AIMED QUESTIONS BY ME AND I CAN DEFLATE THEM, BUT IT STILL BUGS ME.

ISN'T THAT A BIT ELITIST?

THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH BEING ELITE.

OR ANOTHER EXAMPLE.



THIS ONE ISN'T COLLECTIBLES BUT IT'S THE SAME KIND OF THING. I'M IN A BOOK STORE... FOR NEW BOOKS. I'VE GONE A BIT CRAZY AND I'M ABOUT TO SPEND A COUPLE OF HUNDRED BUCKS. I MURMUR UNDER MY BREATH "MONEY'S TOO TIGHT TO MENTION."

NOW THE GUY BEHIND THE REGISTER, HE HEARS THIS. HE LOOKS AT ME, NODDING HIS HEAD KNOWINGLY LIKE WE'RE IN SOME "CLUB OF COOL" TOGETHER. HE SAYS, "YEAH... SIMPLY RED," LIKE IT'S A PASSWORD. AND NOW WE DO THE SECRET HAND SHAKE.



AND I'M THINKING "SIMPLY RED"? LAME ENGLISH BAND. MORE SOUL AT A POLKA CONVENTION. AND THE BOOK STORE GUY THINKS HE'S ON SOME KIND OF INSIDE LOOP WITH THAT.



YOU'RE LIKE MY EX-BOYFRIEND. HE WAS THAT WAY ABOUT AUTHORS. HE'D DELIBERATELY DROP OBSCURE QUOTES AND REFERENCES. HE'D TAKE OVER CONVERSATIONS AT PARTIES. BUT NONE OF WHAT HE READ WAS FOR THE LOVE OF IT. HIS KNOWLEDGE WAS LIKE A WEAPON.

DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE LIKE THAT. I DON'T WANT ANOTHER JERK. I'VE HAD--

JACK, THAT'S THE SMUGGEST THING I EVER HEARD. A GUY TRIES TO BE NICE, AND YOU STAND THERE HATING HIM JUST BECAUSE HE HASN'T HEARD OF THE VALENTINE BROTHERS.



HEY, WHY ARE YOU SMILING?

BECAUSE YOU'VE HEARD OF THE VALENTINE BROTHERS.



YOU DIDN'T HEAR A WORD I SAID, DID YOU?

YEAH, YEAH.

NO, NO. YOU DIDN'T HEAR A WORD.



WELL, CHANGING THE SUBJECT, DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE FIREBOMB TODAY? IN THE DEPARTMENT STORE?

I SPENT ALL MORNING ON THE PHONE WITH CLARENCE O'DARE. I HEARD, ALL RIGHT.

STROOMS



DO THEY KNOW WHO PLANTED IT? WAS IT THE MIST?

NO. NO WORD OF HER YET. THE BOMBER IS A GUY CALLED "THE INFERNAL DR. PIP." HE TELEPHONED THE POLICE. NO DEMANDS, THOUGH. NOT YET.



YOU'LL CATCH HIM?

I'LL TRY.

RING RING



'SCUSE ME. THIS COULD BE CLARENCE WITH FRESH NEWS.

HELLO?

HELLO, JACK.



DAD? ARE YOU OKAY?

YES. I'M FINE. STILL NO SIGN OF GRUNDY. I EVEN PUT IN A CALL TO ALAN SCOTT, TO KEEP AN EYE OUT IN HIS CITY. BUT APART FROM THAT--




ANYWAY, I CALLED BECAUSE A LETTER JUST CAME SPECIAL DELIVERY TO THE OBSERVATORY. BUT IT'S FOR YOU, NOT ME.

FROM?



DIAN BELMONT.

A man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a dark coat, stands on a rooftop or balcony. He is looking out over a city with various buildings under a sunset sky. The scene is framed by a large circular inset in the bottom right corner, which shows a close-up of a man's face wearing a turban.

HIS WIFE DONA'S EYES, BLACK LIKE JET, STILL GLISTEN BEFORE HIM. HE MISSES HER. HER SUGARCANE KISSES. HER EMBRACE. HE LOVED HER SO.

AS MUCH AS HE HATED OTHERS, SO HIS LOVE FOR DONA HUNG HIGH FROM THE MAINSAIL OF HIS HEART, IN CONTRAST TO THAT HATE.

AND THERE WERE OH SO MANY HE HATED.

THE MUSLIM CORSAIRS OF BARBARY, WITH THEIR SCIMITARS AND THEIR CRUELTY AND THE MASSIVE RAMS AT THEIR GALLEY BOWS. WITH THE HORRORS OF THE BAGNIO DAMNING THEM TO DANCE THE JIG OF SALTY NIGHT IN THE HEREAFTER.

AND THOSE WHO UPON BEING TAKEN BY THESE BRIGANDS DIDN'T ENDURE AS TRUE CHRISTIANS SHOULD. THOSE WHO "TURNED TURK" WERE WORSE, FAR WORSE, IN THE GHOST'S EYES, THAN THE CORSAIRS WHO CHAIN-RIVETED THE ANKLET'S BINDINGS.

THERE WAS A BATTLE, THE GHOST RECALLS. HE FOUGHT ALI-ED-DIN, WHO CLAIMED TO BE THE LEGENDARY KHAIR-ED-DIN'S BASTARD. IN THE BATTLE ABOVE DECK, THE GHOST SENT THIRTY OF ED-DIN'S JANISSARY TO THEIR MAKER BEFORE HE FINALLY REACHED HIS FOE.

IT TOOK HIM THREE DAYS TO RECOVER FROM IT TOO. WITH BALLS TO HIS THIGH AND FLANK, AND CUTS APLENTY.

OF COURSE KNOWING EL-DIN WAS DEFEATED AND THAT HIS HEAD HUNG FROM THE BOWSPRIT MADE THE HEALING EASIER.



My dear Jack,

You are one of the few people to whom I am writing, to explain what Wesley and I are planning. It's a sobering aspect to living as long as we have, that there are so very few people we knew who are still around. You are by far the youngest, and in some ways the most important person to receive this news.

Wesley and I are going away. Forever. This is goodbye to the world that we know. Wesley is old enough that he envisions the end, and I have been to the doctors recently and told that though I may live to see the new millennium, it's doubtful I'll spend much time in that century.

Yes, Jack, I have an illness. But it will take a while for the effects to be debilitating, so Wesley and I have decided to go on one last adventure together while we still have the time.

Wesley has of late renewed his interest in things Eastern. The religions and philosophies, the architecture and the life in general. This was his youth, after all. It was all he knew as a boy. It seems only apt that he should return to this as the curtain draws on him.

I shall accompany Wesley. We shall travel. We shall seek and laugh and explore, and as often as our old bones allow it, make love under exotic moons. There are holy men and thinkers whose words and deeds are displeasing to the political regimes of their lands. Wesley would like to meet with these men, to discuss their philosophies. Meeting them will have an element of danger, which means this final excursion of ours will be very much an adventure. More so than merely some glorified excursion by two aged fools.

You should see Wesley as he packs and prepares. He's young again, Jack. In his eyes and his thoughts. Yesterday, as he called embassies and scanned maps and arranged things, I saw again the man I loved once. And I began to cry with happiness.



And this is why I write, Jack. It's because of you that Wesley is this way. He was always still my Wes, but in the last few years I'd see the man I originally fell in love with leave my side. Wesley became old. Locked in memories. The past is a fine thing, but only when the memories of it enrich life in the present. The past for Wes, however, had become a small dark room where he had taken up residence. He was preparing to die, and I could do nothing to stop him.

And then you come along, and the adventure we shared. You and your youth. Wes enjoyed being around it. He became alive again. Only a few weeks prior, learning of my sickness would have been yet another reason for Wes to retreat further into the dark room of his yesterdays.

Instead the news mobilized him.

You have given him back to me, Jack, and for that I give you my utmost love and thanks. And I give you a gift.

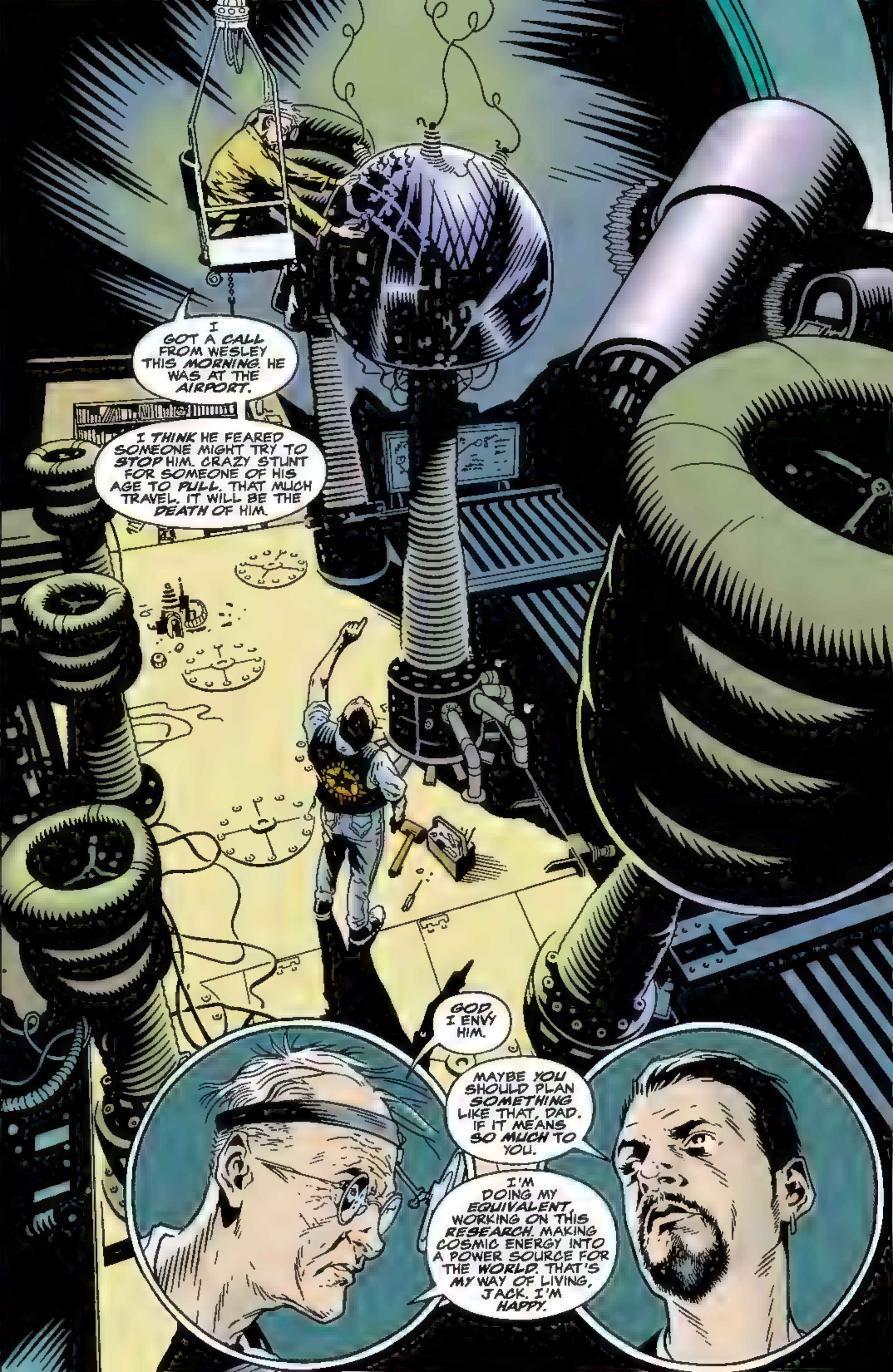
We have liquidated all our assets in preparation for the travels. I have allocated a sum from this money and transferred into an account of yours. When we spoke about what it was you wanted most in the world, you talked of a shop you wished to purchase. You needed the money. I have inquired about the price, including sundry taxes and closing fees, and that amount, as well as an amount for remodeling has been given to you.

By the time you read this letter we'll be gone. As I said above, the world will never hear from us again, so there is no use in your not accepting the gift. Just take it with the gratitude of Wesley and myself.

Have a good life, Jack. Have a long life. And please strive to find the happiness that Wesley and I have both savored. My thoughts and prayers are with you, as are Wesley's fondest regards.

Yours in love and gratitude,
Dian Belmont





I GOT A CALL FROM WESLEY THIS MORNING. HE WAS AT THE AIRPORT.

I THINK HE FEARED SOMEONE MIGHT TRY TO STOP HIM. CRAZY STUNT FOR SOMEONE OF HIS AGE TO PULL THAT MUCH TRAVEL. IT WILL BE THE DEATH OF HIM.

GOD I ENVY HIM.

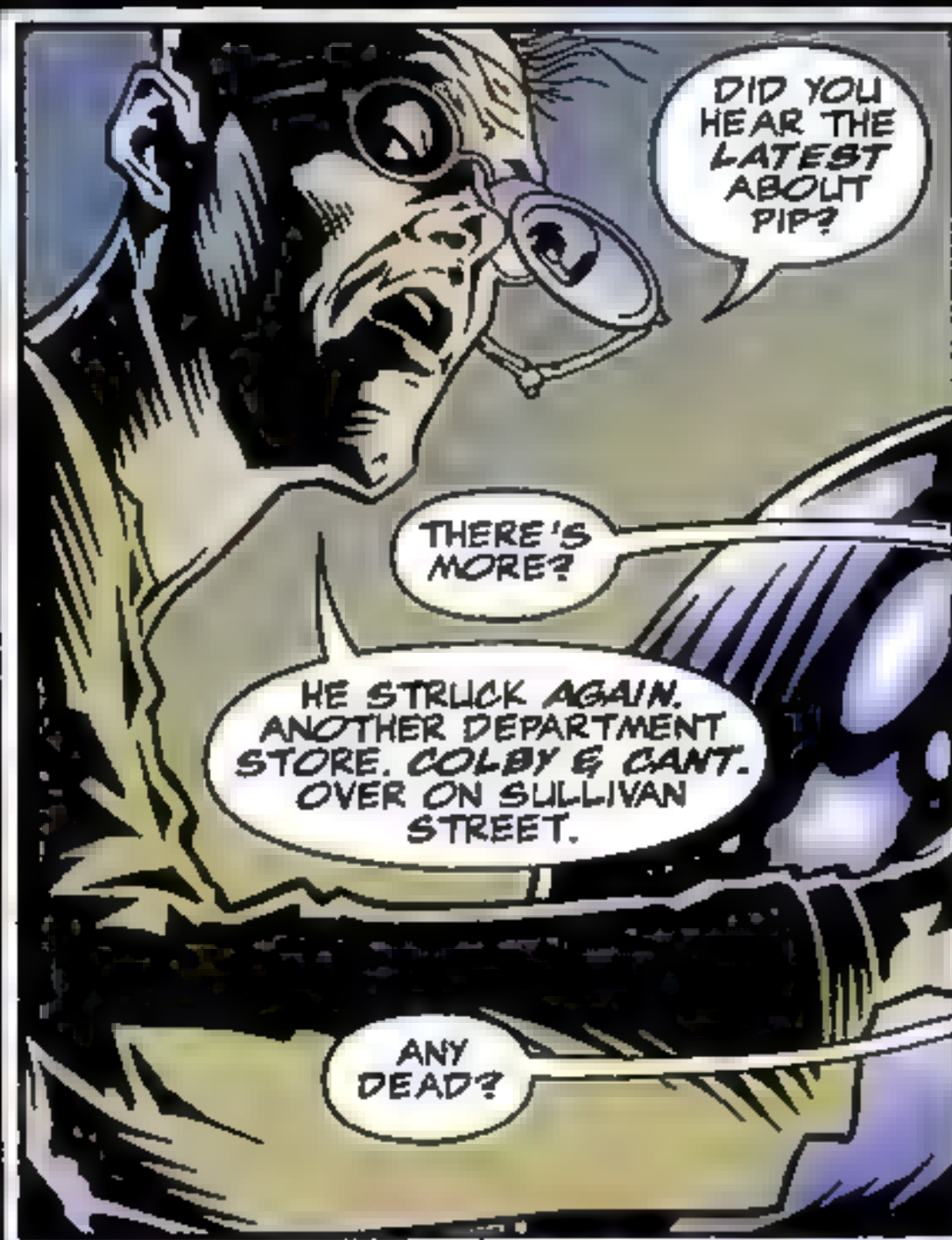
MAYBE YOU SHOULD PLAN SOMETHING LIKE THAT, DAD. IF IT MEANS SO MUCH TO YOU.

I'M DOING MY EQUIVALENT, WORKING ON THIS RESEARCH. MAKING COSMIC ENERGY INTO A POWER SOURCE FOR THE WORLD. THAT'S MY WAY OF LIVING, JACK. I'M HAPPY.



I'VE GOT MY SHOP, DAD. DIAN AND WESLEY GAVE ME THE MONEY FOR MY SHOP.

THAT'S WONDERFUL, JACK. THAT'S GREAT NEWS. BUT...ERR...IF YOU NEEDED MONEY, WHY DIDN'T YOU COME TO ME? I WOULD HAVE HELPED YOU.



DID YOU HEAR THE LATEST ABOUT PIP?

THERE'S MORE?

HE STRUCK AGAIN. ANOTHER DEPARTMENT STORE. COLBY & CANT. OVER ON SULLIVAN STREET.

ANY DEAD?

FIVE. ABOUT FORTY OTHERS WITH BURNS.

LISTEN, I GOT A CALL FROM A FELLOW NAME DUDLEY DONOVAN. I KNEW HIS GRANDFATHER BACK IN THE '40s. DISREPUTABLE LITTLE FELLOW. AND THAT TRAIT HAS RUN DOWN THROUGH THE GENERATIONS IF THE WAY DUDLEY SOUNDED ON THE PHONE IS ANYTHING TO GO BY.

BUT HE SAYS HE HAS SOME INFORMATION ON THE INFERNAL DR. PIP.

THE GHOST'S SON WAS A FIGHTER TOO.
JUSTIN. HIS POOR, DEAR, DEAD SON.

HOW HAPPY JUSTIN HAD BEEN WHEN
HIS FATHER PRESENTED HIM WITH HIS
OWN IVORY-EDGED ASTROLABE. A
PARTING GIFT AS THE YOUNG MAN SET
OFF FOR THE NEW WORLD.

THE GHOST WOULD
SEE HIS SON ONLY
ONCE MORE. THEY WERE
ENEMIES THEN. FOR A
TIME. BUT PARTED
FRIENDS AGAIN.

THEN HIS SON WAS
DEAD AND GONE AND
THE GHOST WAS
DEAD AND DOOMED.



AH, THE NEW
CHAMPION
ALOFT. IT'S
TIME TO MEET.
THE GHOST
AND THE MAN
OF CLEAR
NIGHT SKY.
IT'S TIME.



WHEN ALL MIGHT YET...FINALLY...
ONCE AND NEVER NOT BE LAID
LIE.

NOW...

...A CHANGE
OF FACE.

TO HOW HE WAS
WHEN FEARED BY
SPAIN AND THEY OF
TUNIS AND TRIPOLI.

SO THE HERO WILL
SEE THEY ARE
BROTHERS OF THE
HEART.

AND IF THE HERO DOES AID
HIM, AND ANY WOULD IMPEDE
THEIR WAY, THE BLACK
PIRATE'S GHOST NOW
SWEARS ON THE MASK HE
WORE AND WEARS AGAIN...

...THAT HE WILL RAISE THE RED
FLAG OF NO QUARTER GIVEN.

WHYFORE
THE MEET,
DUDLEY? YOU
HAVE WORD OF
PIP, HUH?

UM,
BEFORE I
BEGIN...ERR...YOU
HEARD OF MY
GRANDPA?

I
HEARD A
LITTLE.

HE
WAS YOUR
FATHER'S
SIDEKICK

BILLY O'DARE
WAS AS CLOSE AS
STARMAN EVER GOT TO A
SIDEKICK. YOUR GRAND-
FATHER, NO SLIGHT INTENDED
TO HIM OR YOU...WAS NO
BILLY O'DARE.

ALL RIGHT, MAYBE SIDEKICK
IS TOO STRONG A TERM,
BUT THEY DID HAVE A
RELATIONSHIP.

AND
THAT
WAS?

MY GRANDPA'D GO OUT
AND ABOUT. REAL SOCIAL GUY.
SOCIAL GUYS HEAR STUFF. WHEN HE DID,
HE'D PASS THAT ON TO Y'FATHER. AND
Y'FATHER BESTOWED SOME TOKEN OF
HIS ESTEEM FOR SAID DATA.

YOU'RE
SAYING HE WAS
MY DAD'S
STOOLIE?

I
GUESS.

SO
WHERE'S THIS
LEADING?

WELL, I
HAVE BEEN GIVEN
A STIPEND FROM
CLARENCE O'DARE'S
DISCRETIONARY FUND
FOR THIS KIND OF
THING. I GUESS WE
COULD TRY IT
OUT.

ALL RIGHT,
SPILL...

YOU AND ME,
WE COULD HAVE
THE SAME RELATION-
SHIP. I'M A SOCIAL
GUY. I HEAR THINGS.
AND YOU'RE
STARMAN. WHERE'S
THE DIF?



"...WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE INFERNAL DR. PIP?"

FIREWORKS

MAGIC

TMB

SO WHEN DO WE ISSUE OUR DEMANDS, DR. PIP?

"WE"? "OUR"? I DIDN'T REALIZE THIS WAS A JOINT VENTURE.

YOU WORK FOR ME, REMEMBER.

AND AS FOR DEMANDS, IT'S LIKELY I MAY NEVER HAVE TO ISSUE THEM. IF THE MONEY COMES THE WAY I'M EXPECTING IT TO, THEN LET OPAL THINK I'M A MOTIVELESS MAD BOMBER.

WHEN WILL YOU KNOW?

TOMORROW.

UNTIL THEN, LEAVE ME TO BUILD MY NEXT INFERNAL DEVICE. I PROMISE YOU THIS ONE WILL BE TRULY MEMORABLE.



YOU'VE
CREATED
ENOUGH
MEMORIES
IN THIS CITY,
PIP!



LET'S
GO THROUGH
THE MOTIONS
FIRST,
HUH?

YOU
GOT YOUR DUMB
PACK OF HIRED
MUSCLE.

I HAVE
TO DEFEAT
THEM TO GET
TO YOU.

SAME OLD,
SAME OLD.

'CEPT I JUST
REALIZED...

...I'M GETTING
BETTER AT IT.







BAP BAK BAW

YOU OWE ME YOUR LIFE, SIR.

YEAH, I GUESS I DO.

AND I WOULD ASK SERVICE OF YOU IN EXCHANGE.

TO BE CONTINUED.

Deadman Wade

"THIS IS WHAT
AWESOME
LOOKS LIKE".

DCP